

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended, and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 9-28, and 43-57 are pending in this application, Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 9-15, 18, 19, 21, 23-28, 43, 46, 47, 49-52, and 54-47 having been currently amended. Support for amended Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 9-15, 18, 19, 21, 23-28, 43, 46, 47, 49-52, and 54-47 can be found, for example, in the original claims, drawings, and specification as originally filed. No new matter is added.

In the Office Action of December 13, 2010, Claims 1-28 and 43-56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ikegami (U.S. Patent No. 6,745,334).

In response to the rejection of Claims 1-28 and 43-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ikegami, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent Claims 1, 15, and 43 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

Independent Claim 1 is directed to an image forming apparatus including, *inter alia*:

... a displaying part configured to display a screen used for selecting an application program on an operation display part of the image forming apparatus; and

***an assigning part configured to assign a selected application program that is selected on the screen to a function key when the function key is pushed, such that the selected application program is executed when the function key is later pushed after assigning of the selected application program has occurred;***

a control part configured to launch the application program assigned to the function key when the function key is pushed;

***a determination part configured to determine whether the function key is assigned a plurality of application programs or a single application program;***

***if the determination part determines that a plurality of application programs are assigned to the function key and***

***when the function key is pushed, the control part is configured to display a selection screen on the operation panel, for selecting an application program from among the plurality of application programs assigned to the function key, and launches an application selected on the selection screen; and***

if the determination part determines that a single application is assigned to the function key, the control part launches the single application without displaying the selection screen when the function key is pushed.

Independent Claims 15 and 43 recite substantially similar features as independent Claim 1. Thus, the arguments presented below with respect to independent Claim 1 are also applicable to independent Claims 15 and 43.

Ikegami is directed to an image forming apparatus including a display panel which is operated by a plurality of touch sensors. However, Applicants respectfully submit that Ikegami fails to teach or suggest “***an assigning part configured to assign a selected application program that is selected on the screen to a function key when the function key is pushed***, such that the selected application program is executed when the function key is later pushed after signing of the selected application program has occurred” and “if ***the determination part*** determines that a plurality of application programs are assigned to the function key and when the function key is pushed, ***the control part is configured to display a selection screen on the operation panel, for selecting an application program from among the plurality of application programs assigned to the function key***, and launch an application selected on the selection screen,” as recited in Claim 1.

Page 3 of the Office Action of December 13, 2010 asserts that the feature of “an assigning part configured to assign a selected application that is selected on the screen to a function key when the function key is pushed,” is disclosed in Ikegami as the function key 624. In addition, page 3 of the Office Action of December 13, 2010 asserts that the feature

“if a plurality of applications are assigned to the function key, when the function key is pushed, the control part displays a selection screen, on the operation panel, for selecting an application from among the plurality of applications assigned to the function key, and launches an application selected on the selection screen” is also disclosed in Ikegami as the function key 624 and cites column 8, lines 34-39. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Column 8, lines 27-41 of Ikegami states:

The key 626 is for setting an applications mode. When this key is pressed, the display panel displays a screen for setting an application function mode such as multiplexing, reduced layout mode or display/ - - - mode. For example, the display panel presents a display of keys for setting various application function modes of the kind shown in FIG. 7, thus making it possible to set these modes. ***The key 624 is for setting double-sided operation. For example, three types of double-side modes can be set, namely a "single-double mode" in which a double-sided output is obtained from single-sided documents, a "double-double mode" in which a double-sided output is obtained from double-sided documents, and a "double-single mode" in which two single-sided sheets are output from double-sided documents.*** (Emphasis added).

Thus, the above portion of Ikegami describes displaying the three types of double-sided modes on the selection screen when the function key 624 is pressed like the applications mode key 626. However, in Ikegami the three types of double-sided modes are ***preassigned*** modes of the image forming apparatus. In Ikegami, a user cannot assign a selected application program to the function key 624. The three double-sided modes are preassigned, thus you cannot assign a function other than the three preassigned double-sided modes. Also, in Ikegami, ***the three modes are merely displayed*** when the function key 624 is pushed. Thus, Ikegami fails to suggest the claim feature of an “assigning part configured to assign ***a selected application program*** that is ***selected on the screen*** to a function key when the function key is pushed,” as recited in Claim 1.

Also, in Ikegami, when a mode is selected on a selection screen after the function key 624 is pushed, a mode is set. However, an application program selected on the selection

screen ***is not launched***. Page 2 of the Advisory Action states that “the selected application is executed when the function key is later pushed after assigning of the selected application has occurred. (Col. 8 lines 41-45- thus after the key is set pressing that key ***displays*** the functions that is set or assigned to it.)” (Emphasis added). Thus, this above portion in the Advisory Action seems to acknowledge that after the key is set, pressing the key again merely ***displays*** the functions that are set. In contrast, in Claim 1, “if ***the determination part*** determines that a plurality of application programs are assigned to the function key and when the function key is pushed, the control part is configured to display a selection screen on the operation panel, for selecting an application program from among the plurality of application programs assigned to the function key, and ***launches an application program selected on the selection screen***,” as recited in Claim 1. Thus, in Claim 1, it is the application program that is selected on the selection screen that is launched. Ikegami fails to describe this feature. Further, column 8, lines 41-45 of Ikegami describes a sorting key 625, and does not describe attribute or functions of the key 624, which is asserted to correspond to Applicants’ function key. Thus, column 8, lines 41-45 of Ikegami cannot be used to describe aspects of Applicants’ function key.

Lastly, Applicants respectfully submit that Ikegami fails to teach or suggest “a determination part configured to determine whether the function key is assigned a plurality of application programs or a single application program,” as Ikegami does not describe a part that determines whether the key 624 is assigned a plurality of application programs or a single application program.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 15, and 43 (and all claims depending thereon) patentably distinguish over Ikegami.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 1-28 and 43-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ikegami be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, and in light of the above discussion, the pending claims as presented herewith are believed to be in condition for formal allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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